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## Consumo de álcool entre estudantes de enfermagem

Alcohol consumption among nursing students

Consumo de alcohol en los estudiantes de enfermería

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### ABSTRACT

**Objective:** To evaluate the consumption of alcohol by students of nursing bachelor degree from a private institution in the state of Mato Grosso do Sul. **Method:** It is exploratory and descriptive study with quantitative approach. The instrument was the AUDIT-C. **Results:** The sample consisted of 163 students with female predominance (65.6%). Respondents' age ranged between 18 and 46 years, the average was 23.9 years. It was found that 48.5% of participants make use of risk, 19% abuse and 7.4% are in level of consumption of probable dependency. It was found that the unmarried are more likely to make use of risk than others. It was found that younger and smaller series, greater the chance of making risky consumption of alcohol. There were no differences in consumption between sexes. **Conclusion:** Thus, it is necessary to do prevention strategies for combat this problem.

**Descriptors:** Nursing students, Alcoholism, Substance-related disorders.

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## RESUMO

**Objetivo:** Avaliar o consumo de álcool em estudantes de enfermagem em uma instituição privada no interior do Estado do Mato Grosso do Sul. **Método:** Trata-se de um estudo exploratório descritivo de abordagem quantitativa. Utilizou-se o Teste de identificação do uso de álcool AUDIT- C. **Resultados:** A amostra foi composta por 163 alunos, predominantemente do sexo feminino (65,6%), com idade entre 18 e 46 anos, média de 23,9 anos. Dos participantes 48,5% consumiam em níveis de risco e 19 % uso nocivo. Constatou-se que os estudantes solteiros apresentaram mais chances de consumir bebidas alcoólicas em nível de risco, além disso, quanto mais jovem e em semestres iniciais do curso maiores são chances dos estudantes serem classificados nesse padrão de uso. Não houve diferenças de padrão de consumo entre os sexos.

**Conclusão:** A implantação de estratégias de prevenção para consumo de risco no âmbito universitário torna-se de fundamental importância.

**Descritores:** Estudantes de enfermagem, Alcoolismo, Transtornos relacionados com uso de substâncias.

## RESUMEN

**Objetivo:** Evaluar el consumo de alcohol por parte de los estudiantes de enfermería de una institución privada en el estado de Mato Grosso do Sul. **Método:** Se trata del estudio exploratorio basado en un enfoque cuantitativo. El instrumento utilizado fue AUDIT-C. **Resultados:** La muestra consistió en 163 estudiantes, con un predominio de las mujeres (65,6%). La edad osciló entre los 18 y 46, la media es de 23,9 años. Se encontró que 48,5% de los participantes hacen uso de riesgo, el abuso de 19% y el 7,4% están en el nivel de consumo de la probable dependencia. Se encontró que los solteros son más propensos a hacer uso de riesgo que los demás. Se encontró que más jóvenes y menor sea el número, mayor será la probabilidad de un consumo riesgoso de alcohol. No se observaron diferencias en el consumo entre sexos. **Conclusión:** Por lo tanto, es necesario realizar estrategias de prevención para combatir este problema. **Descriptores:** Estudiantes de enfermería, Alcoholismo, Transtornos relacionados con sustancias.

## INTRODUCTION

The alcohol use among college students has been a source of concern by educators and health professionals in consequence of problems health this behavior can cause.<sup>1</sup> Several research has done in Brazil about this theme<sup>2-8</sup> which indicates that alcohol consumption as a social behavior has started increasingly in this group.<sup>2</sup> Many problems due to alcohol use have been identified and documented in literature.<sup>3</sup> Evaluate consumption pattern can be a useful form to understand the context in which the problematic drinking may be occurring as well as the personal characteristics of these young people, regarding differences consumption patterns between the sexes (male), age (younger) and socioeconomic conditions. Then literature appoints age and gender can significantly influence the frequency, reasons for use, consumption pattern and type of experienced consequences.

Although there is evidence negative consequences of drinking are more present in males justified by higher consumption of alcoholic beverages among this population.<sup>9</sup> Other important factors that may be related to problematic

drinking refers to the student's area (Human, Biological and Exact), the period of study (night) and semester or year that the student is coursing.<sup>2</sup> In addition, there is to consider sociability that alcohol promotes in the social events which university students are participating, the alcohol becomes a socializing agent very well accepted that facilitates interaction between them. Facts that can enhance the consumption of alcohol and its problems.<sup>10</sup>

Alcohol consumption pattern (quantity and frequency) is an important aspect in the initial assessment of any individual. Besides to detect severity levels, it allows the observation of the use of rituals and aids in changes.<sup>11</sup> In terms of definitions, alcohol use harmful or problematic levels refers to a consumption harmful to health, but which does not have criteria for dependence.<sup>12</sup> Health risks (drunkenness, fights, unsafe sex, traffic accidents, etc.) resulting from alcohol misuse among colleges students have been described in literatura.<sup>2-3</sup>

The National Study on alcohol use patterns in the Brazilian population identified that more than 18 000 students use alcohol. Main findings revealed that 86% of college students have had lifetime use of alcohol and 36% drank in intoxication levels in last ano.<sup>8</sup> The literature shows that there are several studies conducted with students from the health area, especially the medicina.<sup>8</sup> However, in recent years, nursing students have been the subject of research as well professionals in the future will be dealing with this problem, which in addition to studying the question, will undertake important roles in reducing the morbidity and mortality associated with this phenomenon.<sup>4</sup> Alcohol consumption in problematic levels by nursing students has been identified in several Brazilian regions what indicates this problem is very present in the life of these estudantes.<sup>4,6</sup>

Research conducted with nursing students at Brazilian Northeast found a strong tendency for consumption problematic use when was evaluated the difference between sex, especially for female.<sup>7</sup> These results do not differ from investigations conducted with nursing students from south of the country which 90% used alcoholic beverages and these 14% were on alcohol intoxication level, five or more doses any occasion.<sup>13</sup> Both Brazilian region south and mid-western has identified nursing students with problematic drinking, especially young women. In Brazilian South Region alcohol 25% of women consumed four or more doses on the occasion, while in the mid-western around 19 % of women consumed four or more doses.

Whereas earlier studies<sup>4-7</sup> have verified problematic alcohol consumption among nursing students, and although more frequent in final year, there are still few studies with this population, and considering the need to map the situation in different regions of the country besides those had been already studied. This article aimed to identify alcohol consumption among nursing students from a private institution located in the State of Mato Grosso do Sul and the influence of sociodemographic characteristics in their consumption.

## METHOD

Study quantitative and exploratory. The sample comprised 163 first to fourth-year undergraduate Nursing students from a private higher education institution in Fatima do Sul a small town located in the interior of Mato Grosso do Sul, Brazil. Students' participation was voluntary.

Approval for this study was obtained from the Institutional Review Board at the Centro Universitário de Dourados - UNIGRAN, Process nº 244/09. National Health Council Resolution 196/96 was complied with, guaranteeing the participants anonymity and information confidentiality.

Students who accepted to participate signed the Informed Consent Term after previous orientations on the study goal and guaranteed anonymity.

For data collection was used Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test AUDIT-C consists of 3 first questions of traditional AUDIT. This test has the same value than AUDIT and takes less time to answer for respondent. For interpretation of the consumption pattern is necessary to add answers, ranging from 0 to 12 points, with different scores between the sexes, scores from four points for females and five for males, indicate harmful use and needs intervention.<sup>14</sup>

Additionally was used a questionnaire addressing general data relating to the participant (demographic data such as gender, age, education level).

The collection was carried out in the classroom after director course acquiescence.

The data analysis was performed with the assistance of program Excel to identify alcohol consumption pattern rated by AUDIT-C.

After, the multiple logistic regression was performed in order to verify the association between the variables of interest in the study (marital status, sex, age, series) with the alcohol pattern use of the participants. Crude Odds Ratio (ORc) (variable cross-response with a covariate) and also Adjusted odds ratios (ORa) for all covariates were used with its respective confidence interval (CI95%). SAS 9.0 was used to conduct the statistical tests.

## RESULTS

Women predominated 107 (65.6%), the average age was with mean age of 23.9 years (SD  $\pm$  5.5). As the university offering the course in night time, all students course this period. Regarding the nursing program year, 50 (30.7%) were first-year, 59 (36.2%) second-year, 52 (31.9%) fourth-year students.

With respect to alcohol consumption the most students had drunk at some moment in the last year and of these, almost half, 79 (48.5%) consumed at low risk level, 31 (19%) harmful level and 12 (7.4%) had scores suggestive of addiction, and 41 (25.1%) consumed without risk, as shown in Table 1.

**Table 1** - AUDIT-C classification according to the nursing

Level	N	%
Non-risk	41	25,1
Low risk	79	48,5
Harmful use	31	19,0
Probable alcohol dependence	12	7,4
<b>Total</b>	<b>163</b>	<b>100,0</b>

It was verified the influence of socio demographic characteristics about alcohol consumption pattern of the participant. Then, was found students of the first year had 3.53 times less probability to do harmful alcohol use in comparison with students of second year. Regarding marital status, there was significant evidence that single/separated/widowed had 4.83 times more likely to do alcohol use level risk than married/cohabiting as shown in Table 2.

**Table 2** – Assessment of variable associated with alcohol use and according to logistic regression

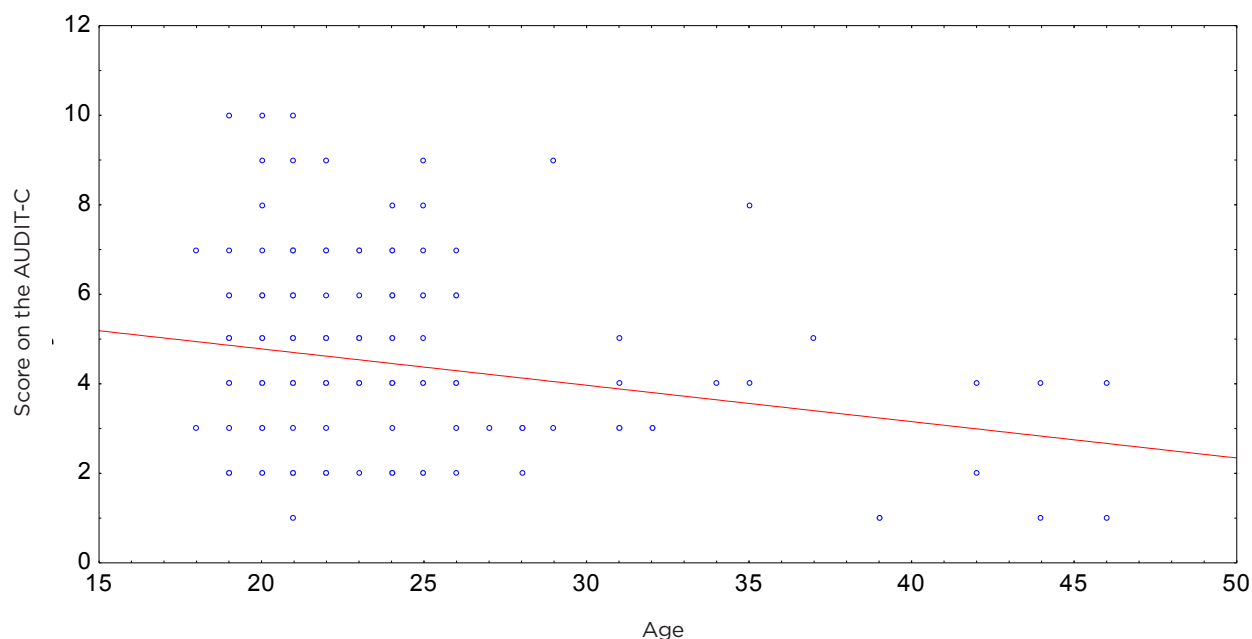
Variable	Classification [n (%)]				NR* X LR**		NR X RU***	
	Non risk	Low risk	Risk use	Harmful use	ORC	ORA	ORC	ORA
					IC (95%)		IC (95%)	
Age								
22 or >	20 (48,78)	41 (51,90)	17 (54,84)	7 (58,33)	1,13 (0,53; 2,41)	0,91 (0,39; 2,14)	1,28 (0,50; 3,25)	0,81 (0,29; 2,29)
< 22	21 (51,22)	38 (48,10)	14 (45,16)	5 (41,67)	Ref.	Ref.	Ref.	Ref.
Sex								
Fem.	23 (56,10)	56 (70,89)	20 (64,52)	8 (66,67)	1,91 (0,87; 4,18)	2,351 (0,96; 5,79)	1,42 (0,54; 3,72)	1,491 (0,51; 4,40)
Male	18 (43,90)	23 (29,11)	11 (35,48)	4 (33,33)	Ref.	Ref.	Ref.	Ref.
Year								
1	10 (24,39)	27 (34,18)	10 (32,26)	3 (25,00)	2,23 (0,87; 5,75)	3,53 (1,14; 10,88)	1,33 (0,39; 4,57)	2,45 (0,58; 10,39)
2	19 (46,34)	23 (29,11)	12 (38,71)	5 (41,67)	Ref.	Ref.	0,84 (0,27; 2,60)	0,991 (0,31; 3,18)
3 ou 4	12 (29,27)	29 (36,71)	9 (29,03)	4 (33,33)	2,00 (0,81; 4,94)	2,02 (0,80; 5,10)	Ref.	Ref.
Status								
Single/ Divorced / Widown	29 (70,73)	62 (78,48)	28 (90,32)	9 (75,00)	1,51 (0,64; 3,57)	1,45 (0,54; 3,95)	3,86 (0,98; 15,16)	4,83 (1,08; 21,71)
Married/	12 (29,27)	17 (21,52)	3 (9,68)	3 (25,00)	Ref.	Ref.	Ref.	Ref.

\* NR – Non risk , \*\*LR – Low risk , \*\*\*RU – Risk Use.

For others variables did not observe influence about alcohol consumption pattern. However, verified that most part of women drank at problematic levels, risk use and harmful use.

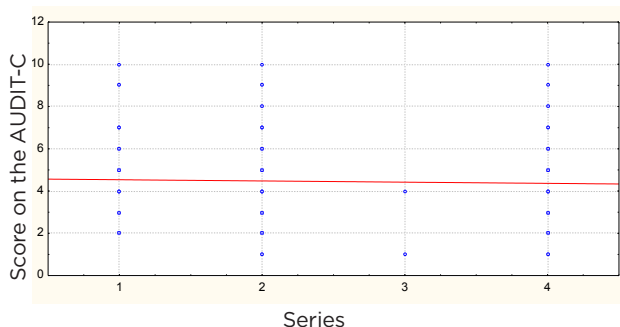
Comparing scored of AUDIT-C and age observed that younger student has higher score on the test, therefore, greater risk for harmful use, according with Graphic 1 .

**Graphic 1** – Relation between age and score on the AUDIT-C



Also achieved a comparative analysis between the series and the score on the AUDIT-C, although this analysis is limited by not having a representative sample of students from third year. But, is possible to compare alcohol consumption of students in the first and last year, verifying that there is no significant difference between the consumption pattern students of the first and the last year of the nursing course, there is practically a continuous line between the consumption pattern through the nursing series with a slight decline in last series.

**Graphic 2** - Relation between scores on the AUDIT-C and course year



## DISCUSSION

This studied aimed to identify alcohol consumption among nursing students as well to verify association between socio demographic characteristics and alcohol consumption pattern.

Young women significantly predominate in this sample as well nursing profession.<sup>4-7,15</sup>

Alcohol consumption is widely present in the life this young students. Most students maintain an alcohol risk level harmful use, not differing from other findings with similar sample.<sup>10</sup>

Regarding marital status, students married or cohabiting they were less likely to consume alcohol at risk level, in comparison to single, divorced or widowed. Therefore, can assume that singles groups/separated/widowed have a more active social life, and attending more college parties or bars which makes those consume more alcohol.

With relation alcohol consumption and age verified that younger student is risk factor to harmful use. This finding agrees with others researches, whose explanation can be linked the search for new and alcohol initiation consumption during family intimacy.<sup>2,9</sup> Hence, this a concerning factor because studies appoint that how earlier start alcohol consumption is more likely to develop disorders related to excessive alcohol consumption and its consequences in adult life adult.<sup>15</sup>

As to gender, there were no difference the risk levels between men and women corroborating with others studies.<sup>3-4,6-7,15</sup> The same was verified with students from others areas.<sup>16</sup>

Researches indicate there is a female trend increasingly to consume alcoholic beverages.<sup>8</sup> This fact deserves attention because female body is more prone to the harmful effects of alcohol than male body, besides lower doses for women is more detrimental when compared to men and they are more likely to develop dependency.<sup>6</sup>

Another source of concerning is a large number of women that use oral contraception and consume alcohol at problematic level which use may cause negligence with contraception and risk of unwanted pregnancy. In this group include nursing student, which 77% have a problematic use with medication interaction.<sup>17</sup>

One explanation for the high pattern of women alcohol consumption is their economic independence, their achievement of certain rights and positions in society and their struggle for gender equality has done that women adopt some habits typically male, among it alcohol consumption.<sup>15</sup>

This research found that there are no association between the alcohol consumption and series in which students are enrolled. This found indicates that probably the nursing faculty is not helping to promote changes in the drinking habits of nursing students. Another study also found that nursing students in their final year are consuming alcohol at problematic levels.<sup>4</sup> However, the same study indicates that preventive interventions can be effective to reduce consumption in this population.

In comparison, first year student has less harmful use than second year student in proportion.

Possible explanation would be that second year student are more socialized and therefore attending many party where drinking more at same time second year student need further study and dedication to the course and it can create stress and tension causing it to relieve this stress and tension consumed more alcohol as occur with others students from others courses.<sup>18</sup> Proving this fact there is a survey of nursing students achieved in Peru. In this study, 48 % of second year nursing student consumed one or two doses per day and 51,2% consumed more than three doses always they drank.<sup>19</sup>

This may also be an indicator that these students might be cultivating unhealthy habits such as smoking, sedentary life, overweight, and abuse of other drugs, as pointed in another study with nursing students.<sup>20</sup>

This study did not verified relation between alcohol and religion although others studies had found that religion do not influence on alcohol consumption.<sup>4,17</sup>

This research presents as limitations does not have a representative sample of the third year students and have not specified the type of beverage more consumed by students as well the local or occasion when alcohol is consumed.

This fact is relevant because the town where achieved the research is small and there are few parties options or leisure as bars, clubs and nightclubs where alcohol consumption is quite stimulated. It is possible that the same is happening during socialization of students. Thus, future studies could



explore differences between student's alcohol consumption in small towns and in big cities.

Advances brought by this study for area are the mapping of alcohol consumption by students of unexplored regions of the country and the cities of the Mato Grosso do Sul State.

## CONCLUSION

This research found that nursing students from a small town in the Mato Grosso do Sul are consuming alcohol at harmful levels as well in larger cities. There were differences between genders or between the series of course in relation at alcohol consumption. It has been found that drinking at hazardous and harmful is higher among single and separated, and enrolling in the course favors problematic drinking hence second year students tend to drink more than in comparison to those who are entering.

It is suggested that investigations about this phenomenon must be achieve, which one research follow up it can follow the development students' habit drinking during the nursing course faculty. Furthermore, prevention strategies are needed as well to deal this theme during faculty.

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